

Valley United Presbyterian Church
Clerk of Session
P. O. Box 611
Waverly, NY 14892



5 November 2017

Rev. Dr. James Martin
Stated Clerk
Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley
PO Box 87
Nineveh, NY 13818

Ms. Margaret Zeigler
Stated Clerk
Presbytery of Lackawanna
816 Olive Street
Scranton, PA 18510

Dear Stated Clerks:

At a called congregational meeting today the congregation voted unanimously to concur with the Session recommendation that our church and pastor be members of the Presbytery of Lackawanna. A copy of the meeting minutes are attached.

Also attached is an Overture that was approved for submission to both Presbyteries. Our request is that both Presbyteries act at their next meeting to approve and forward this Overture which would realign the synod (and hence presbytery) boundaries to formalize the membership status. This request is in accordance with the plan of consolidation that was passed by both Presbyteries in November 2013, a copy of which is also attached.

The entire congregation of Valley United is thankful for the support we have received over the past five years – both in our legacy congregations and our new united one - from each of our original Presbyteries of membership. Your support, encouragement and prayers have helped us to move forward as God has called our congregation into this time of change and growth.

If you have any questions concerning this, please feel free to contact me. My home phone is (607) 565-7298, cell is (607) 738-5052 and dalebarber@stny.rr.com is my email address.

Yours in Christ,

Dale R. Barber
Clerk of Session

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES
VALLEY UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

5 November 2017

The called Congregational Meeting of the Valley United Presbyterian Church was held on 5 November 2017 for the purpose of voting on a motion to have the church and pastor become members of the Lackawanna Presbytery and submit an Overture to accomplish this membership.

Following the 10:15 AM worship service, moderator Reverend Sharan Knoell Rosso called the meeting to order at 11:20 AM in the church sanctuary and opened with prayer.

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to approve the docket as presented. Clerk of Session Dale Barber declared a quorum with 58 members in attendance.

The Clerk of Session presented the motion from Session:

MOTION: The Session recommends that Valley United Presbyterian Church, and its Pastor, be members of Lackawanna Presbytery. The Session seeks congregational concurrence. If the way be clear, the Clerk is directed to communicate this decision and the proposed Overture to both Lackawanna and Susquehanna Presbyteries. These actions are in accordance with the agreement entered into by the three legacy churches and both presbyteries at the time of church consolidation.

The Clerk of Session briefly explained the agreements passed by both Presbyteries that allowed the church to affiliate with either at the completion of the consolidation. He also explained the purpose of the Overture and the process going through Synods to the General Assembly. Elder Jim Krapf also helped explain the Sessions reasoning in making the decision and recommendation that it did.

The moderator asked if there were any further questions or discussion. There being none, the vote was taken. By unanimous voice vote the congregation agreed to pass the motion as presented.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting; this was seconded and carried unanimously.

Reverend Rosso closed the meeting with prayer at 11:29 AM.

Rev. Sharan Knoell Rosso
Moderator

Dale R. Barber
Clerk of Session

Overture to GA and Synod [#9]

The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley AND the Presbytery of Lackawanna overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to realign the border between the Synod of the Northeast and Synod of the Trinity so that the Village of Waverly, NY of the Town of Barton, both political subdivisions of Tioga County New York, shall be within the boundary of the Synod of the Trinity and the Presbytery of Lackawanna, thus transferring the First Presbyterian Church of Waverly, NY to Lackawanna Presbytery.

Rationale:

The larger community that residents refer to as ‘The Valley’ consists of the Village of Waverly, NY and the Boroughs of South Waverly, Sayre and Athens, PA as well as the immediate surrounding area. The total population of the area is approximately 30,000. Were it not for signage, no person would ever think that there were multiple municipalities in our community based on our physical location and layout.

Although divided into four small communities and separated by a state line the area functions in many respects as one entity. Examples are Waverly being the only locality in New York that has electric and natural gas utilities supplied by Pennsylvania public utilities. Interstate highway 86, although built and maintained by New York, is located in Pennsylvania for both ‘Waverly’ exits. In many ways Waverly is more a part of Pennsylvania than New York.

Historically there were three PCUSA congregations, one each in Athens, Sayre and Waverly. These churches had cooperated in many endeavors throughout their existence and in fact one was formed as a mission of the oldest, that taking place in 1847. The state line resulted in these churches being separated into separate presbyteries and synods in spite of being only 4 miles apart at the furthest point. In fact, these churches sit at the corner juncture of 4 presbyteries.

In 2012 the Sessions of the three churches agreed to begin talks concerning their future. This activity was begun with the full support of both presbyteries having jurisdiction. Following these initial talks all three congregations participated in the New Beginnings process. During this time the congregations began worshiping jointly. None of the churches had an installed minister of word and sacrament at this point in time. As a result of this work in the summer of 2013 all three congregations voted to consolidate effective the first day of 2014. In November 2013 both presbyteries approved the same motion and plan that would see the combined church at some point joining one of the two presbyteries; a copy of this action is attached. At the same time a PNC was searching for a pastor to be called to the new church; this effort was completed in August 2014.

The congregations joined as one on 1 January 2014, forming Valley United Presbyterian Church. A new corporation was formed that consolidates the previous churches into one; it is a Pennsylvania corporation recognized as a church that is also recognized by the State of New York, under the applicable religious law, to function as a church in the State of New York. It should be noted that this is the only known church recognized by both states in this manner. Effective 1 January 2014 all financial assets of the three churches were combined.

Although one organization from a secular standpoint, ecclesiastically the church is currently considered a ‘Greater Parish’ by PCUSA. This requires maintenance of a ‘shadow’ set of

Overture to GA and Synod [#9]

records in able to properly submit required reports annually. As per the agreement adopted by both presbyteries, the congregation is considered a member of Lackawanna Presbytery and the pastor a member of Susquehanna Presbytery; however both have voice and vote in both presbyteries. Care has been taken to only vote once on GA matters and the congregation has fully paid all per capita to all jurisdictions in accordance with the initial agreement.

The congregation has worked hard on the consolidation and decided to sell both church buildings in Pennsylvania and renovate the one in New York. This was in spite of the majority of membership being from the Pennsylvania churches. Under the initial agreement that all three congregations and both presbyteries adopted at the start of this process, the consolidated church would be able to select the presbytery of membership regardless of physical location. The congregation, after careful and prayerful deliberation, has decided to remain a member of the Lackawanna Presbytery. However, PCUSA is unable to accomplish this without a modification of the synod boundaries. As far as the congregation is concerned we are one church, regardless of bureaucratic matters.

Although Valley United has a historical relationship with both presbyteries and synods we need to have full affiliation with only one to continue our ministry to our community in the most efficient manner.

Attachment is of

http://www.susvalpresby.org/files/2814/0423/4406/PSV2013_Complete_Minutes.pdf

Pages 179-185 of Susquehanna minutes, Nov 2013 meeting.